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Rebecca Wright <wright_rm@msn.com> on 10/19/2001 09:36:43 PM

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To: YMP_SR@ymp.gov
cc:

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Subject: Yucca Mountain Site Characterization M/S #025

Part of Records Package / Supplement / Correction



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October 19, 2001

Carol Hanlon, DOE

Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office (M/S #025)

P.O. Box 30307

North Las Vegas, NV 89036-0307

Dear Ms Hanlon:

In light of recent the recent terrorist activity, I am more concerned than ever about the Yucca Mountain Project. Thousands of casks of UO_2 fuel rods sitting on a desert parking lot would be sitting ducks for a terrorist attack! We don't know what the future may bring. With today's bunker penetrating missals, a repository would also be vulnerable.

The approval of the radioactive waste repository at Yucca Mountain seems driven by the nuclear industry, the investment of \$7 billion dollars and 20 years of research. All the time, money and technology will not make the inherent dangers disappear.

The Yucca Mountain Site: Yucca Mountain is riddled with faults and earthquakes are frequent. New research on nearby volcanoes suggests that due to faults some areas would be more vulnerable to an igneous intrusion. It also suggests that rather than breaking through the repository at its weakest point and blowing out a few canisters during an eruption, lava would flow through the tunnels. The canisters would fail as a result of being heated and weakened by the lava flow. Shock waves created by the lava flow would be powerful enough to break open the ends of some repository tunnels and allow most of the contents in those tunnels to be expelled to the surface.

The Repository: Currently, scientists are rethinking every aspect of the repository, from longer tunnels and less densely packed casks, to the effect of the ground water on the casks and the need for a drip shield to protect them. It has not been determined whether the tunnel should be cooled and dehumidified or whether the heat from the casks will vaporize any groundwater which may seep into the tunnels.

Radioactive Waste Transport: Shipping high-level radioactive waste by rail or on busy highways through our cities and towns endangers residents all along the route. The Department of Energy now admits that current canister technology might not withstand an accident, or a terrorist attack. The proposal to proceed with the repository and ship the waste indicates that, should there be an accident or a terrorist attack, industry and the government are willing to risk disrupting a community -- including evacuating an exposed area, the enormous cost of a cleanup, and the risk to human health.

In short, nobody can predict what might happen en route, at the Yucca Mountain site or in the repository during the next 100 years let alone the next 10,000 years. The recent terrorist attacks indicate that anything is possible. Therefore no one, not the scientists, congress, or George W. Bush can make an informed decision.

Nuclear reactors have always been vulnerable to accidents, terrorists and knowledgeable saboteurs. The nuclear industry and the Department of Energy can no longer pretend that with

another techno-fix, it can be business as usual. I urge the Department of Energy to leave the waste at the reactor sites, order the nuclear power plants to stop generating more waste â□" shut them down! and increase security at the site.

Let us move to **safe energy** â□" using non-polluting, renewable technology.

Sincerely,

Rebecca M. Wright

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